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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COSMOPOLITAN-LOCAL  
ORIENTATION AND JOB PERFORMANCE

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#338



Abstract

The relationships between cosmopolitan-local orientation and measures of job performance were examined for 150 technical employees in 3 architectural firms. The hypotheses were based upon the requirements for professional recognition and organizational effectiveness. As predicted, cosmopolitan-local orientation emerged from a factor analysis as two independent dimensions. Cosmopolitans were viewed as following prescribed work hours and impressing clients and visitors. Locals were seen by their coworkers, but not their supervisors, as high task performers. Also locals were rated by their coworkers as not impressing others. Implications of the results for organizational strategies to promote cosmopolitan and local orientations are discussed.





## The Relationship between Cosmopolitan-Local Orientation and Job Performance

Merton (1957), referring to influential people in a community, initially conceptualized cosmopolitans as individuals who are oriented toward the outside world and locals as those who are narrowly concerned with the affairs of the community to the exclusion of world affairs. Extending this concept to university faculty members, Gouldner (1957) characterized cosmopolitans as "those lower on loyalty to the employing organization, higher on commitment to their specialized role skills, and more likely to use an outer reference group orientation." (p. 290). Locals, on the other hand, were defined as those with opposite characteristics.

While the cosmopolitan-local distinction is parsimonious as an explanation of a professional's orientation toward his/her work, further research has found the construct to be more complex. In a subsequent analysis of his data, Gouldner (1958) divided cosmopolitans into two groups: outsiders and empire builders. Locals were split into four groups: dedicated, true bureaucrats, homeguards, and elders. Other researchers have differed in their conceptualization of cosmopolitans and locals. The construct has been alternately viewed as a multidimensional set of variables (Goldberg, Baker & Rubenstein, 1965; Blau & Scott, 1962; Berger & Grimes, 1975; Flango & Brumbaugh, 1974) and as a bipolar unidimensional variable (Abrahamson, 1965; House & Wigdor, Note 1; Ritti, 1968). Goldberg,



et al (1965) expanded the cosmopolitan-local classification system to include four categories. In addition to the original cosmopolitan and local categories, a third category, termed "complex," was formulated to describe those employees who are simultaneously loyal to both their employing organization and their profession. As such, they are actively involved in reference groups both internal and external to the organization. The fourth category, termed "indifferent," describes those who are neither loyal to their organization nor their profession, having little interest in either internal or external reference groups.

The relationships that have been found between cosmopolitan-local orientation and work behavior should be viewed in the light of the particular profession that is being investigated. Gouldner's (1957) study of faculty members revealed that locals tended to participate in group decisions and utilize formal rules in problem solving more than cosmopolitans. Furthermore, locals with low influence were much more disposed to utilizing formal rules than those with high influence. In general, faculty who succeed at the local level do so through attaining administrative positions. Hence, group decisions and university rules would be expected to be important to the local. Recognition at the professional level is usually based on research, publication, convention attendance, and other activities that promote national visibility. Therefore, cosmopolitans understandably would be concerned primarily with their own productivity and professional activities.

Bennis, Berkowitz, Affinito, and Malone (1958) studied the cosmopolitan local orientation of nurses in an out-patient department. Since the professional organization did not reward skills, knowledge, and research, those nurses concerned with the development of their professional field, labeled cosmopolitans, abandoned efforts toward recognition by the larger field in favor of performing the functions for which they were trained and



increasing their own skills in the area. Locals, those concerned with achievement within the local situation, attained advancement in the employing organization and, concomitantly, professional recognition by accepting the role of administrator.

These studies demonstrate that the nature of the profession must be understood in order to predict the effects of employees' cosmopolitan-local orientation on work behavior and attitudes. The present study focuses on technical employees of three large architectural firms. While many architectural firms are sole proprietorships and small partnerships, increased specialization within the field has resulted in the creation of large national firms employing as many as 600 technical and non-technical personnel in one regional office. Cosmopolitan-local orientation should be particularly important to the behavior and attitudes of employees of large architectural firms since the field of architecture, similar to other fields, has been experiencing rapid growth and increased professionalization.

Recently, there has been a rise in turnover among technical employees in architectural firms (Blumer, 1974). While this trend may have been tempered by recession cutbacks, advancement usually occurs by obtaining a higher paying, more prestigious position in another firm. To gain a better job in another firm, employees must vie for credit for important projects that will receive professional recognition. A second, related problem is that advancing technology has resulted in increasing specialization within the field of architecture. This makes it difficult for an individual to demonstrate clearly the contribution he/she has made to a single project. One of the most pressing problems of architectural management is the promotion



of efficient teamwork (Caudill, 1971). A concern for coordination and cooperation within the work group is frequently at odds with seeking professional recognition through a visible personal contribution to a project.

The literature on cosmopolitan-local orientation and our analysis of the large architectural firm leads to several hypotheses. First, cosmopolitan-local orientation should emerge as two independent dimensions. That is, identification with the organization need not preclude identification with the profession or vice versa. An employee may be characterized as a cosmopolitan, local, both, or neither.

Further hypotheses deal with the relationship between cosmopolitan-local orientation and job performance. A review of the general job behaviors of technical employees in architectural firms revealed three performance dimensions important to the organization and the individual that should be related to cosmopolitan-local orientation. These are task performance (e.g., quantity and quality of work), following the firm's prescribed schedule of work hours (e.g., attendance and promptness), and impressing others. A positive relation can be expected between supervisor ratings of task performance and cosmopolitan orientation. Cosmopolitans seek professional recognition through a visible contribution to a project. Therefore, they should be recognized by their supervisors as high performers. The cosmopolitan's domination of projects and possibly ingratiation toward supervisors should lead co workers (i.e., those without supervisory responsibility who work on the same projects together) to downgrade their task performance. Locals, on the other hand, are concerned with the efficiency of the work unit and the group output. Consequently, they should be viewed





as effective by their coworkers but not by their supervisors who are usually unaware of every employee's contribution to each project.

Cosmopolitans and locals should also differ with respect to following prescribed work hours and impressing others. Locals can be expected to adhere closely to the schedule of work hours since identification with the organization should be evidenced in a willingness to follow rules and regulations. Cosmopolitans may be somewhat lax about following rules and regulations, but there is no a priori reason to expect a strong relationship between cosmopolitan orientation and following prescribed work hours. Cosmopolitans should strive toward self-enhancement by impressing clients and visitors with a favorable personal appearance. However, locals would not be as likely to attempt conveying a favorable impression of themselves to others.

#### METHOD

##### Sample

One hundred fifty male technical employees at three large architectural firms participated in the study. Approximately two thirds of the technical employees from each firm volunteered to complete the questionnaire. This resulted in 55, 22, and 73 respondents from the three firms. The sample included non-management and non-clerical personnel at about the same organizational level in such areas as architectural design, architectural engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, interior design and urban planning. Since the number of respondents from each professional category was too small for separate analysis and since no meaningful differences were found between firms on the variables measured, the data were treated as a single sample. The mean age was 34 years and the mean tenure with the firm was 4 years, 4 months.



## Questionnaires

Cosmopolitan-local orientation: Cosmopolitan-local orientation was assessed by self-reports of biographical characteristics, professional accomplishments, and work behavior. These data included age, tenure, level of education, number of publications, number of patents and copyrights, attendance at meetings of professional societies, offices held in professional societies, number of professional journals to which the respondent has personal subscriptions, and how many people in the firm the respondent felt he knew well. Salary was also included after correction for age and tenure following the formula presented by Friedlander (1971): [present salary-predicted salary (based on age and tenure)]/predicted salary (based on age and tenure). Other items, primarily adapted from Gouldner (1957, 1958) dealt with such concepts as loyalty to the firm, importance of community exposure, personal skill development, desire for private work outside the firm, and adequacy of salaries in the firm. Two questions asked the respondent about his chances of finding another job as good or better than his present job, tapping the concept of organizational independence presumed to be important to cosmopolitan-local orientation (House & Kerr, 1973; Kerr, 1972). All the items and their corresponding response formats are presented in Table 1.

Performance: Supervisor and coworker ratings were collected on three scales developed to measure the job performance dimensions deemed important for this study. Task performance was assessed by four items: "skill in planning specific tasks," "amount of work performed," "completion of work on schedule," and "quality of work (neatness, errors, etc.)." Following prescribed work hours was measured by two items: "attendance and promptness



in beginning work" and "observance of rest and lunch time periods."

Impressing others was also measured by two items: "making a good impression on clients and visitors" and "personal appearance." Each item was rated on a 20-point scale ranging from minimum performance to maximum performance. Supervisors and coworkers completed the same scales. Respondents rated their coworkers by placing letters corresponding to their names on the appropriate scale points such that all coworkers were rated together on each scale. The available coworker ratings for each respondent were averaged for each item. Supervisors rated all their subordinates together on each scale. The process of rating more than one individual on a scale encourages greater attention to effectiveness concepts, and therefore results in greater care in making ratings (Guion, 1965, p. 99). The items within each sale were averaged to obtain three job performance scores from the supervisor's point of view and three from the coworker's point of view. The available performance evaluations included supervisor ratings for 61 respondents and coworker ratings for 135 respondents.

Ratings were obtained from both supervisors and coworkers because observer perceptions in a job setting differ according to their expectations and perceptions of behavior (Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, & Weick, 1970). According to Lawler (1967), supervisors have an overview of the job situation which is consonant with the goals of the organization, and they should be in the best position to judge an employee's contribution to those goals. Coworkers see aspects of the employee's behavior of which the supervisor may be unaware. Furthermore, coworker ratings of performance have been found to be highly reliable and valid predictors of later performance in industrial and military contexts (e.g., Downey, Medland, & Yates, 1976).



## Procedure

The questionnaires were administered to the members of each work group who volunteered to complete the survey. The nature of the items was explained to each group separately. At that time, queries were answered, and the employees were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be reported to the firm only in aggregate form. The questionnaires were completed on the respondent's own time and returned to an official of the firm in sealed envelopes which were then mailed to the researchers.

## Results

The Pearson product moment correlations between the items intended to measure cosmopolitan-local orientation were subjected to a principal factor analysis. The first two factors emerging from this analysis accounted for 26% of the total variance. The factor loadings resulting from a varimax rotation applied to these two factors are presented in Table 1. The first factor, accounting for 61% of the common variance, consisted of items typifying a local orientation. Items with high loadings (those greater than .30) indicate that individuals with high scores on this factor would not be likely to leave if offered the same job elsewhere, derive intellectual stimulation from their colleagues in the firm, and believe the own success is related to the success of the firm. Furthermore, individuals with high scores on this factor feel they know many people in the firm well have been employed by the firm longer, and are older than individuals with low scores. The factor also includes employees who neither believe salaries in the firm are low nor that the way other professionals view their work is more important than the opinions of coworkers in the firm. Finally, locals believe that involvement in community affairs is important because it can bring notoriety to the firm and improve public relations.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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The second factor, accounting for 39% of the common variance, consisted of items denoting a cosmopolitan orientation. Employees with high scores on this factor belong to more professional societies, are more likely to regularly attend meetings of these societies and hold offices in them, subscribe to more professional journals, and spend more hours reading them than those with low scores. Other variables with positive loadings on this factor include level of education, number of professional registrations held, level of salary (corrected for age and tenure), number of firms for which the respondent has worked during his career, and number of publications. The high cosmopolitan believes that involvement in community affairs is important both because it brings notoriety to the firm and because it provides the employee with professional exposure. Also, cosmopolitans believe that they should have their loads lightened to make more time available for private research, writing or other work in their fields.

Factor scores were computed for each individual on the cosmopolitan and local dimensions by summing each item's standard score weighted by its corresponding factor coefficient. The correlation between the two factor scores was  $-.03$  (n.s.) supporting the independence expected from the varimax rotation.

Prior to examining the relationship between cosmopolitan-local orientation and job performance, the intercorrelations and reliabilities of the job performance measures will be examined. These are presented in Table 2 along with the means and standard deviations. The reliabilities were calculated by applying the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula to each scale's median interim correlation. The reliabilities range from .91 to



.99 demonstrating significant internal consistency within each scale. The relationships between supervisor and coworker ratings tend to be low, ranging from .06 to .35. All three coworker measures are significantly related to the supervisor ratings of impressing others. Possibly, employees rated their coworkers on all items using some of the same cues that supervisors used in judging the extent to which a subordinate makes a favorable impression on others. The lack of agreement between supervisors and coworkers on the same scales is consistent with prior evidence that the rater's point of view affects perceptions of job performance (Lawler, 1967; Klimoski & London, 1974).

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Insert Table 2 about here



Examining the interrelationships among the different scales for the same rater indicates a degree of rater response bias or halo which is also consistent with previous findings (Klimoski & London, 1974). That is, the relationships between the different scales are high for supervisor ratings (ranging between .30 and .62) and for coworker ratings (ranging between .64 and .70). Therefore, both zero-order and partial correlations were used to examine the relationships between the job performance measures and the cosmopolitan and local factor scores. The partial correlations for each performance measure removed common rater response bias by holding constant the other performance measures derived from the same rater. For example, the partial relationship between the supervisor ratings of task performance and the cosmopolitan scores held constant the supervisor ratings of impressing others and following prescribed work hours.

The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3. Examining the zero-order correlations first, cosmopolitan scores are significantly related to supervisor ratings on all three performance scales. Thus, supervisors seem to have a general tendency to rate cosmopolitans higher on all the performance measures. Contrary to prediction, employees with higher local scores tend to be viewed by their supervisors as lower in following prescribed work hours. As predicted, coworker ratings of impressing others increase as employees' cosmopolitan scores increase. Also as predicted, there is a significant positive correlation between the local factor scores and coworker ratings of task performance and following prescribed work hours.

Insert Table 3 about here



The partial correlations removing common rater variance from the zero-order correlations support the findings that supervisors rate cosmopolitans as high in impressing others and high in following prescribed work hours. The partial correlations also support the findings that coworkers view cosmopolitans as high in impressing others and view locals as high in task performance. A finding emerging from the partial correlational analysis that was not evident in the zero-order analysis is a significant negative relationship between coworker ratings of impressing others and employees' local factor scores. Thus, consistent with the hypothesis, the higher an employee's local orientation, the lower he is rated by his coworkers as impressing others.

The interaction between cosmopolitan and local orientation in relation to job performance was examined in two ways. First, the two factor scores were multiplied such that a low score represents low scores on both factors and a high score represents high scores on both factors. A moderate score represents fairly high scores on one dimension, whether cosmopolitan or local orientation, but not on the other. The relationships between this interaction term and the performance measures are included in Table 3. Both zero-order and partial correlations are significantly positive for coworker ratings of task performance. Thus, the higher employees are on both cosmopolitan and local orientation the higher they are viewed by their coworkers on task performance. The zero-order correlation was significantly positive for coworker ratings of following prescribed work hours but this was not supported by the partial correlation.

The interaction term analyzed above does not differentiate between the high cosmopolitan-low local and the high local-low cosmopolitan. Therefore, the second procedure utilized median splits to dichotomize employees





on the local and cosmopolitan dimensions. A two by two analysis of variance was performed on each performance measure with the factors consisting of high and low cosmopolitan and high and low local. Also analyses of covariance were performed on each measure holding constant the other common rater performance measures. No significant interactions emerged from these results, hence they are not presented here in detail. Apparently, the additive effects of the combination of high cosmopolitan and high local orientation on coworker ratings of task performance and following prescribed work hours were not strong enough to emerge from these analyses.

#### DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that cosmopolitan-local orientation can be conceptualized as two independent dimensions for technical personnel in the architectural firms studied here. A local orientation was typified by an unwillingness to leave the firm, deriving intellectual stimulation from colleagues at the firm, and a feeling that employee unity is important. A cosmopolitan orientation was typified by involvement in professional societies, subscribing to and reading professional journals, and a higher education level.

An analysis of the architectural profession allowed us to predict the relationship between cosmopolitan and local orientation and job performance. The results demonstrated that different behaviors can be expected from cosmopolitans and locals. We correctly predicted that cosmopolitans are viewed by their supervisors and coworkers as impressing others. Locals, on the other hand, are rated by their coworkers as less likely to impress others. As expected, locals are viewed by their coworkers but not their supervisors as high task performers. Contrary



to prediction, a significant positive correlation occurred between employees' cosmopolitan scores and supervisor ratings of following prescribed work hours. Thus, cosmopolitans seem to be concerned about conscientiously following company rules and conveying that impression to supervisors. Other findings indicated that the response bias of supervisors is to rate cosmopolitans high on all three performance scales. Lastly, coworker perceptions of employees' task performance increase as cosmopolitan and local orientation increase together.

The effects of organizational strategies to develop cosmopolitan and/or locally oriented employees should be investigated. Promoting a local orientation by providing attractive fringe benefit packages, frequent pay increases not tied to performance, pleasant physical surroundings, etc., may reward mediocre performance without advancing the reputation of the organization. Organizations that foster a cosmopolitan orientation by encouraging involvement in professional societies, maintaining company subscriptions to professional journals, providing funds for educational advancement, etc., are likely to benefit employees who follow work rules and create a favorable impression on others. Attempts to enhance both cosmopolitan and local orientations may be most beneficial in terms of generating higher task performance that will be recognized by supervisors and coworkers without substantially increasing employee desires to leave the organization.

The current study emphasizes that specific types of work behaviors are likely to be reflective of cosmopolitan-local orientation. Furthermore, the effects of cosmopolitan-local orientation should be viewed in terms of the nature of the profession under investigation. Other predictions might



have been appropriate if we were dealing with another sample. Nevertheless, there may be common elements across professions that are related to cosmopolitan-local orientation. Therefore, cosmopolitan-local orientation should be studied in a variety of professions to reveal those common elements.



Foot notes

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Table 1. Final Factor Loadings for Organizational-Professional  
Orientation Measures

	Factor I	Factor II	2
	Local	Cosmo	<u>h</u>
Would leave firm if offered the same job with another nationally-acclaimed firm (1 = at a lower salary; 2 = at the same salary; 3 = at a higher salary; 4 = would not leave)	<u>74</u>	05	55
Would leave firm if offered the same job with another local firm (same response format as above)	<u>71</u>	20	54
Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would remain in this firm <sup>a</sup> indefinitely.	<u>70</u>	03	50
I would advise a friend to consider <sup>a</sup> our firm.	<u>46</u>	13	23
Even though they are competent, some- how or other I get very little intellectual stimulation from <sup>a</sup> my colleagues here.	<u>-41</u>	-01	17
It is important that we all pull together for the good of our			



Table 1 Continued

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firm because if our firm is			
successful, then we will			
be successful. <sup>a</sup>	<u>40</u>	10	17
About how many people in the firm			
do you feel you know well?	<u>38</u>	02	15
Total length of time employed by			
this firm	<u>38</u>	-03	14
Although there are probably rea-			
sons for this, it is too bad			
salaries at our firm are so			
low. <sup>a</sup>	<u>-37</u>	-03	14
The way other professionals view			
my work is more important to			
me than the opinions of co-			
workers in this firm. <sup>a</sup>	<u>-37</u>	-05	14
Age	<u>36</u>	<u>34</u>	24
Getting involved in community			
affairs is also important			
because it can bring			
notoriety to our firm and			
improve our public relations. <sup>a</sup>	<u>31</u>	16	12
Number of professional societies in			
which respondent is a member	20	<u>61</u>	41
Do you regularly attend meetings of			
professional societies? (1=no;			
(2 = yes)	09	<u>60</u>	37



Table 1 Continued

	Factor I Local	Factor II Cosmo	2 <u>h</u>
Number of offices respondent has held in professional societies.	00	<u>54</u>	29
Approximate number of hours spent reading professional journals or other related material each week.	07	<u>53</u>	28
Number of personal subscriptions to professional journals.	-06	<u>52</u>	28
Level of education.	-23	<u>49</u>	29
Number of professional registrations held by respondent (e.g., regis- tered architect, architectural engineer, mechanical engineer, etc.)	15	<u>45</u>	22
Salary corrected for age and tenure: [present salary - predicted salary (based on age and tenure)]/ predicted salary (based on age and tenure).	15	<u>41</u>	19
Number of architectural firms respondent has worked for during his career	- <u>30</u>	<u>39</u>	24
Number of published books or articles written during the last five years.	12	<u>36</u>	15
Getting involved in community affairs is important because it can			



Table 1 Continued

	Factor I Local	Factor II Cosmo	2 <u>h</u>
provide me with professional a exposure.	03	<u>32</u>	10
Architects should have their loads lightened to make more time available for private research, writing, or other work in their a fields.	-26	<u>31</u>	16
Level to which respondent is continuing his education (0 = not at all; 1 = Bachelors; 2 = Masters; 3 = PhD or other higher than Masters).	-03	05	00
If you are registered, do you do any outside consulting (1 = no; 2 = yes) (note, only registered personnel are permitted by law to consult).	-11	28	09
Number of patents or copyrights for which respondent is responsible.	00	10	01
If I could arrange it, I would take some extra college course work if I felt it would improve			





Table 1 Continued

	Factor I Local	Factor II Cosmo	2 <u>h</u>
my professional skills. <sup>a</sup>	07	14	02
Improving my skills as a professional is more important to me than any individual project. <sup>a</sup>	-28	08	09
People should have a genuine concern and a deep commitment to their profession. <sup>a</sup>	24	14	08
If you really looked for another job in the near future, what do you think are your chances of finding one that is as good or better than your present job? (1 = no chance at all or probably would not find one; 2 = probably would find one or certain to find one).	-24	09	07
About how many job openings would you say there are in this city that are as good as yours? (1 = very many or fair number; 2 = small number or very few).	-05	-10	01

Note--Factor loadings greater than 30 are underlined. Decimals are omitted.  
Items are arranged to maximally disclose simple structure.



Table 1 Continued

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<sup>a</sup>

Responses to these items were made on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" through 4 = "neither agree nor disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree."



Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations between

Job Performance Measures.

	$\bar{x}$	SD	Supervisor Ratings			Coworker Ratings		
			Task Performance	Impressing Others	Following Prescribed Work Hours	Task Performance	Impressing Others	Following Prescribed Work Hours
Supervisor Ratings (n=61)								
Task Performance	12.86	4.10	(.99***)					
Impressing Others	13.23	3.78	.30**	(.96***)				
Following Prescribed Work Hours	13.30	4.25	.62***	.40***	(.97***)			
Coworker Ratings (n=135)								
Task Performance	13.17	3.32	.14	.29*	.09	(.96***)		
Impressing Others	12.64	3.56	.09	.35**	.14	.65**	(.94***)	
Following Prescribed Work Hours	13.03	3.43	.06	.34**	.11	.70**	.64***	(.91***)

Note-- Numbers in parentheses are reliabilities calculated by applying the Spearman-Brown prophesy formula to the median interem correlation for the items in each scale.

\*  $P < .05$                       \*\*\*  $P < .001$

\*\*  $P < .01$



Table 3. Zero-Order and Partial Correlations between  
Job Performance Measures and Cosmopolitan  
and Local Orientation Factor Scores

	Cosmopolitan Score	Local Score	Cosmopolitan*Local Scores
Supervisor Ratings (n=61)			
Task Performance	.30** (.04)	-.13 (.02)	.09 (.05)
Impressing Others	.39*** (.26*)	-.13 (-.04)	.15 (.12)
Following Prescribed			
Work Hours	.41*** (.23*)	-.23* (-.17)	.08 (-.01)
Coworker Ratings (n=135)			
Task Performance	.07 (-.06)	.25** (.24**)	.25** (.16*)
Impressing Others	.20** (.20**)	-.01 (-.27***)	.11 (-.09)
Following Prescribed			
Work Hours	.08 (-.03)	.20** (.14)	.22** (.09)

Note--Numbers in parentheses are partial correlations calculated by holding constant the other performance measures derived from the same rater.

\*  $P < .05$

\*\*  $P < .01$

\*\*\*  $P < .001$















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